



# Tobacco Tid-bits

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**Southwest Washington Health District**

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## Tobacco Legislation Introduced

Congress is considering legislation aimed at reducing teen tobacco use. A bipartisan bill was introduced by the *Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids*. On Valentine's day three Representatives sent a memo to their colleagues urging them to "have a heart" and co-sponsor the tobacco legislation. It would give the FDA regulatory authority over tobacco products. Members of SOUL, a statewide youth tobacco prevention group and local Clark County youth will converge on the state capital in Olympia March 7 for *Legislative Lobby Day*. They hope to speak with Governor Gary Locke and Attorney General Christine Gregoire about tobacco issues. (See calendar for local contact).

## Recruiting for TATU

One hundred students from eight area schools just completed TATU (Teens Against Tobacco Use) training. The SW Washington Health District has been recruiting and training local sophomores in this program for seven years. "The exciting and different thing this year," according to *District Health Educator Theresa Cross*, "is that we did recruitments at three schools only—all other schools already had a core of interested teens." The all-day training taught students about tobacco, addiction, it's history and tobacco advertising/media. "The majority of teens aren't using, they don't think it's cool, and they want to help prevent younger students from starting!" said Cross. The students will take this knowledge back to their schools, where they will work with their TATU coordinator to plan presentations for 5th and 6th grade classes.

## New Health Educators Dive In

The SW Washington Health District's newest Health Educators, Pamela Walker and James Kissee haven't been here long, but they are already making big contributions in tobacco education efforts. James has helped start up a new youth task force called BREATHE, and he is recruiting students for TATU training. His past experience includes training teachers all over the U.S. on developing better coordinated school health programs. Before coming here, James worked for Seattle King County Department of Public Health, focusing on STD/HIV/AIDS and pregnancy prevention. Pamela is working with Tobacco and Environmental Health Services to develop tobacco smoke prevention projects and education programs. She just completed an article for a restaurant newsletter, that will go to all the restaurants in Clark and Skamania Counties, entitled, "Why it Makes Good Business Sense To Go Smoke Free." Before this position, Pamela developed Health and Wellness programs for hospital community health education programs and businesses. She has also taught health classes at Mt. Hood Community College, where she developed and even hosted health segments for Multnomah Community Television. Contact James at: 397-8214 or [jkissee@swwhd.wa.gov](mailto:jkissee@swwhd.wa.gov). Pamela: 397-8215 x 3025 or [pwalker@swwhd.wa.gov](mailto:pwalker@swwhd.wa.gov).

## Cigarettes Kill Pets, Too

A 20 year old Sifton man recently died of smoke inhalation when his mobile home caught fire. His pet cat was also lost in the blaze. A county fire marshal suspects a cigarette started the fire. And in a separate but related incident that same weekend, a Hoquiam man lost his dog. Hoquiam fire officials say a 71 year old cancer patient started a fire by smoking in his bed. The man survived the fire. His dog did not. Currently, both the Washington State House and Senate are considering bills dealing with fire-safe cigarettes. AP

## Smoking Moms-to-be

Fewer women in Washington are smoking during pregnancy, according to a recently released 9-year *Right Start* Study. But the good news does not translate into Clark County. The study shows that just over 18 percent of mothers smoked during pregnancy in 1998 in Clark County. That is 6 percent higher than the national average and 4 percent higher than the state average in 1998. "Women who smoke have a higher risk of having a baby that is born pre-term and also having a low birth weight baby," according to Theresa Cross, Health Educator with the SW Washington Health District.



## Youth Task Force

Their logo is a lung with bandages, their slogan is "Clean Mouth Clean Choices." They are BREATHE, a new youth tobacco prevention team. These local high schools students, coordinated by Health Educator James Kissee, have dedicated themselves to helping youth make positive choices about tobacco. They hope to reach their peers through presentations, a video, even putting on a tobacco awareness dance. They are recruiting. Contact James: 397-8214.

## Stop Smoking Tax Break

The IRS recently announced that it was reversing a long-standing position, by allowing the cost of anti-smoking programs to qualify as a medical expense deduction. The cost of prescription drugs to alleviate nicotine withdrawal also qualifies as a medical expense, but over-the-counter nicotine gums and patches do not. *Taxes for Dummies*

### Deposit on Cig Butts

Tired of cigarette butts littering your city? A Maine legislator introduced a bill that would add a 5-cent tax to each cigarette. Smokers could redeem their deposit by bringing in butts in batches of 20. *Smokescreen.org*

## Babysitters Secondhand Smoke

Parents are being cautioned by researchers to not overlook the babysitter when it comes to secondhand smoke exposure. A recent study shows a significant portion of children with nonsmoking parents had relatively high levels of environmental tobacco smoke exposure. Smoking is usually not permitted in organized daycare facilities, but many children are cared for in informal settings, such as a neighbor or relative. Exposure to secondhand smoke can increase a baby's risk of respiratory problems, ear infection, and SIDS. The study appears in the *December issue of Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*. *Reuters*.

## Quit Line Gets Big Response

The response to the Quit Line has exceed expectations— receiving between 60-90 calls daily, with no lull between calls. More than 200 Clark County residents have called the statewide Quit Line since November.

Part of the Quit Line promotions include post cards, posters, brochures and check inserts with the Quit Line number on it. That number is: **877-270-STOP** in **Español: 877-2 NO FUME** and **TTY: 877-777-6534**. Contact James Lanz if you would like Quit Line promotional items: 397-8416 or [jlanz@swwhd.wa.gov](mailto:jlanz@swwhd.wa.gov).

## March Calendar of Events

- March 2,** Northwest Media Literacy Center meeting. Portland, 8:30-11:30 AM American Lung Association, 9320 SW Barbur Blvd., Suite 140. Contact: Erik Vidstrand, 503 988-3663, 1 ext. 28805.
- March 7,** Legislative Lobby Day. Washington State Capital, Olympia. 10-1 PM. Contact: Rayme Martens 263-2136
- March 8,** CMASA meeting - 3:30 PM Skamania Courthouse Annex. Contact: Susie Strom (509) 427-9490 x297
- March 12-13,** Tobacco Free Coalition of Oregon statewide conference. *Building Bridges to a Tobacco Free Future*. Portland Marriot Hotel. Cost: \$135. Contact: TOFCO 888 846-5437 or Patricia Hale at [phale@teleport.com](mailto:phale@teleport.com)
- March 13,** Tobacco Free Coalition of Clark County meeting - SW Washington Health District auditorium - 2:30-4 PM. Contact: James Lanz, 397-8416
- March 14,** BREATHE - Youth Task Force meeting. Skyview High School, 3:00 PM. Contact: James Kisse, 397-8214
- March 15,** Cessation Task Force meeting. SW Washington Health District, 2:30-4 PM. Contact: James Lanz, 397-8416
- March 20,** Multnomah County Tobacco Prevention Coalition Quarterly meeting. Portland, 10am-2pm. American Heart Assoc. 1725 NE Irving, Suite #100, conf. room A/B. Contact: Erik Vidstrand, 503 988-3663, 1 x28805.
- March 21,** Community Choices 2010's Health & Safety Committee Meeting SW Medical Center's Memorial Campus, 12-1P.M. Contact: CC 2010 at 694-2588

Please let us know if you have a tobacco related event you would like posted here.